

Dec 5, 2014

Response to the DEC's 2011 Draft SGEIS

Rebecca Elgie, healthylink@earthlink.net, 409 Linn St., Ithaca, NY 14850

I am writing as a resident of the Finger Lakes Area of New York State. I chose to move to this area 22 years ago because I was attracted by its beauty, hiking trail beside streams, lakes and gorges. I am very concerned that these waterways which are the life blood of this area will be threatened by and polluted by High Volume Hydraulic Fracturing. I appreciate that you are calling for disclosure of the chemicals being used in the process but I don't think that is enough to safeguard that dangerous chemicals will not be released into our waterways. The recent floods are of great concern and despite the prohibition of well pads in 100 year floodplains these floods have impacted on areas never before flooded with such intensity that guaranteeing that there won't be seepage into wells and streams is almost impossible. I don't understand why it is felt that the watersheds of New York City and Syracuse need protecting when the watersheds in other areas of upstate New York such as Ithaca are not. An accident with a truck carrying fracking brine near our Six Mile Creek reservoir could pollute the whole water supply for Ithaca.

The most common reason given for moving ahead with gas drilling in the Marcellus shale area is that it will help the economy of the region. I think we need to consider all the economic factors - some landowners will see economic gain and some jobs will be created but many of these jobs are not local and in other localities where drilling is happening we have seen rising housing costs, road repair costs and health and safety concerns all of which in the end have a negative economic impact. My daughter recently bought a home in an area of New York State where much of the land is leased including her property. It was difficult for her to get a mortgage, it is questionable whether the property would be saleable if drilling is done either on her property or adjacent properties and certainly the good quality of life would change, the very reason she wants to live there would no longer exist. Just the threat of drilling in this area of New York State is having an impact on land prices and the economics of the region. Until this issue is settled to the satisfaction of residents and people who have been researching this issue, small businesses will be hesitant to locate here, particularly businesses such as wineries, small organic farms etc. which have been a growing segment of our economy.

I appreciate that you have conducted these hearings, listened and made adjustments adding more regulations but I hope you will conclude that drilling in this region is not wise or at least recognize the right to "Home Rule" in communities who feel that Hydraulic Fracturing should be banned in their community based on the needs and concerns of residents.